

pt. 1782 10:00 PM, MAR 17

CLOSE UP - NBC WHITE PAPER - THE MAN
WHO SHOT THE POPE

Sponsor of program invited guests to a screening and handed out copies of the transcript. A State Dept. guest forwarded a copy of his transcript to DDI/Terrorism who forwarded copy to Public Affairs.

STAT

26 Jan. 1983 Revised version of 21 Sept.
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Revisions inserted to 21 Sept. version

STAT

NBC WHITE PAPER - THE MAN WHO SHOT THE POPE - A STUDY IN TERRORISMMY
STATTeaseMARVIN KALB: (Vo)

It happened on May 13, 1981 on a warm Wednesday afternoon. An unsuspecting Rome sparkled in the sunlight, each of its fountains a silent witness to other intrigues. The dome of St. Peter's dominated the skyline of the Eternal City. It was exactly 5:17 P.M. The Pope, riding in his white Jeep through the crowded square, had just opened his general audience, blessing a young girl and waving to the faithful. Then, suddenly, a hand, a gun, and a volley of fire. The Pope slumped, hit by two bullets. By attempting to kill the spiritual leader of 800,000,000 Catholics, the gunman had committed a monstrous crime-- an unprecedented act of terrorism that also wounded two American tourists, innocent bystanders. There was in St. Peter's Square horror and disbelief. Who would want to shoot a Pope? The gunman turned out to be a 23-year old Turk, Mehmet Ali Agca, a professional killer wanted for murder in Turkey. He seemed, under the circumstances, remarkably cocky.

AGCA: (Vo)

I am very sorry two tourists wounded.

MARVIN KALB: (Vo)

He expressed regret about having wounded the tourists, but not about having shot the Pope.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE:

Why did you do it?

MARVIN KALB: (Vo)

At the time, everyone rushed to judgment, reaching different conclusions about Agca. He was, to some, a lonely and deranged killer, an Islamic fanatic out to punish the Christian West. To others, he was an agent of the Far Left, Libya or Palestinian extremists. Perhaps of the Far Right, neofascists in Turkey and Western Europe. It should be said early on in this mystery that there is little or no evidence to support any of these theories. But then, if not, who was Agca? ~~_____~~ *was he part of a conspiracy?*

~~_____~~
~~_____~~
~~_____~~
~~_____~~
~~_____~~
~~_____~~

MARVIN KALB: (OC)

After a nine-month investigation, NBC News has accumulated a great deal of evidence, some of it, to be sure, circumstantial, linking the attempted murder here in St. Peter's Square to the political and diplomatic needs of Red Square. A Soviet connection is strongly suggested, but it cannot be proved. In the high risk world of international terrorism, deniability is crucial and expected, and responsibility is always carefully laundered. For the next hour, join us on this dramatic odyssey, retracing the steps of the man who shot the Pope.

main Title

Act I

MARVIN KALB: (VO)

It is said of John Paul II that he is happiest on Wednesday afternoons--when he emerges from the inner sanctum of the Vatican and mingles with thousands in St. Peter's Square. His general audiences, though jam-packed and public, still have a touch of intimacy about them. The priest

mk(vo) (ont'd

in this Pope communes with individuals in the crowd--each, to him, a precious gift from God. He stops, he chats, he jokes, he prays, he touches, almost always with a gentle smile. These are his hallelujah people--his emotional flock. [VOICES OF THE CROWD IN BACKGROUND.]

Ⓟ John Paul is special. He is the first non-Italian Pope in 455 years, the first Slavic-born successor to St. Peter. He is conservative in theology, daring in his Polish politics, though now more cautious. Indeed, his nationalism has become indistinguishable from his Catholicism. During this time of trouble they have, for John Paul, become one. It is a dangerous combination. [SINGING OF THE CROWD.]^(ol) One week before the assassination attempt, the Pope, operating on a kind of dark premonition, talked to his Swiss guards, his personal police force, about terrorism. He said, "We pray to God that violence and fanaticism will be kept far away from the Vatican. It may happen that one day you will be asked to sacrifice your life." On May 13, 1981, the Pope almost lost his.

mk(vo)

During the attempted assassination, one bullet creased the Pope's left shoulder. He instinctively bent forward, and that saved his life.

VO Cont'd

The second bullet hit the index finger of his left hand, and then entered the upper part of his abdomen, causing massive lesions and loss of blood. Agca almost succeeded in his mission. It is now clear from photographs taken just seconds before the shooting that Agca did not act alone. He had one accomplice, probably two, in this conspiracy to kill the Pope. One is seen with Agca. Turkish police have identified the man on the right as ^{OMER} Ay , whose false passport was produced on the same day and in the same place as Agca's. The other suspected accomplice, photographed after the shooting by an American tourist, has not yet been named by the Italian police. They speculate that Agca's accomplices were supposed to create a diversion so that he could escape in the commotion. But they either panicked and ran, or deliberately betrayed Agca.

← [mk VO]

[OVER ITALIAN VOICE] For Italy, Agca's trial was uncharacteristically brief--three days, starting July 20, 1981--almost as if someone wanted to sweep it under the rug. Agca, the defendant, was haughty, defiant, dismissing his attorney and claiming in a fifteen minute peroration that he had intended merely to wound

the Pope, not kill him. He even challenged the right of the Italian court to try him.

AGCA: OC

[IN FOREIGN TONGUE.]

MARVIN KALB: VO

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The presiding judge, SEVERINO SANTIAPICHI, in his first public comments on the case, marveled at Agca's mental agility.

SEVERINO SANTIAPICHI
JUDGE [REDACTED]: [THROUGH INTERPRETER] (VO? OC?)

One thing is certain--that all the interrogations of Agca reveal a lucidity and an ability, an exceptional ability of his, to mislead the investigations, and to direct the particular investigator, which presumes either a personal and natural capacity, or a specific schooling in this matter.

MARVIN KALB: (VO)

Agca, in a signed statement, mixed fact with fiction, throughout suggesting that he yearned

mk VO Cont'd

for some kind of international notoriety. For what, he did not say. What he did say revealed a chilling cast of mind. "I'm an international terrorist," he said. "Ready to help other terrorists everywhere. I make no distinction between fascists or communists. The international terrorist, as I see it, is not bothered by ideological labels. He has confidence in guns, and that's enough." [Prosecuting Attorney - Italian]

mk VO

But to a prosecuting attorney, and others, it is not all that stark and simple.

OC Nicolò Amato

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER [PROSECUTING ATTORNEY?]
[THROUGH INTERPRETER]

I believe that there was a plot behind Agca's criminal gesture. A plot hatched in other places, hatched by other brains, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
(OC) SEVERINO SANTAPILI

The court, however, maintains that Agca was manipulated--trained, directed, helped and subsidized to kill the Pope. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

MARVIN KALB (V0)

MAZZOLA,
 Francesco [REDACTED] charged with state security
 at the time of the Agca crime, relates it more
 directly to Eastern Europe.

MAZZOLA: (OC)

FRANCESCO [REDACTED] [THROUGH INTERPRETER]

The suspicion which arises is that the Pope was
 targeted not so much because he was the head of
 Christianity, but because he was a Polish Pope,
 at the moment when, in Poland, there was on one
 hand a big revival of Catholicism, and on the
 other the link between this religious revival
 and the Solidarity Union in confrontation with
 the Communist state, and above all with the
 Soviet Union.

MARVIN KALB (V0)

[OVER CHURCH CHOIR] Victory Square, Warsaw,
 June 2, 1979. Eight months after becoming Pope,
 John Paul returned to Poland--the start of an
 electrifying visit. More than just a hometown
 boy who made good, John Paul seemed to personify
 Poland, a magical link between church and state
 that left little room for the commissars. (S) With
 his presence and his prayers, the Pope unified
 the Polish people--a modern day Becket, challenging
 the very legitimacy of Marxist rule. (S) The Pope's

MK (VO) Cont'd.

blending of religion with nationalism proved to be a heady ~~mix~~ for the people of Poland who suddenly realized that, for all their vulnerabilities, they now had a trusted friend in Rome, one of their very own, who was not afraid of the Russians, and ~~who~~ commanded vast legions throughout the world. ⁽⁸⁾ The fact is John Paul, with this visit, inspired his countrymen to dream the impossible dream that one day they would be free.

[CROWD CHEERS] And for a brief time, they dreamed and acted and won a measure of freedom, encouraged every step of the way by the Pope's defiance of Soviet warnings.

NAT SOT - gdansk WORKERS' STRIKE ?

(mk VO)

→ In August, 1980, the workers in Gdansk led a series of crippling strikes. They demanded fundamental reforms--freedom of speech and assembly, an independent trade union, an unfettered church. In the Communist world, these demands were unprecedented. A crackdown seemed inevitable--if not by Polish authorities, then by the Soviet Army, intervening in Poland, as it had in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and East Germany in earlier times.

MK-OC

But it didn't happen that way, in part, because of the crucial secret role played by the Pope, now disclosed for the first time. NBC News has

MK OC Cont'd

learned that in early August, as the crisis escalated, the Pope sent an envoy to the Kremlin whom we are pledged not to identify. He delivered an extraordinary handwritten letter, in Russian, from the Pope to Soviet leader ^{Brezhnev.} [REDACTED] It said that though the Pope was the head of a universal church, he was still a Pole, and deeply affected by developments in Poland. And if the Russians moved against Poland, he would lay down the crown of St. Peter and return to his homeland to [REDACTED] stand shoulder to shoulder with his people. Backed by this implied threat, the envoy then tried to win Soviet approval for creating Solidarity. He shuttled between Moscow and Warsaw and Warsaw and Rome and finally persuaded the Russians to gamble on coexistence with Solidarity rather than run the risk of an open confrontation with the Pope.

MK VO

The Russians yielded, or so it seemed at the time. [REDACTED] LEADER Strike Lech Walesa signed the historic Gdansk Agreement setting up the first independent trade union in a communist country. He signed it with a leftover souvenir from the Pope's visit.

Public confirmation of the Papal envoy's role has now come from a key Vatican insider, American-born MONSIEUR HILARY [REDACTED] Franco.

MONSIGNOR HILARY

~~FRANCO~~ FRANCO: (OC)

I do believe that, even though the Pope belongs to the world, he's humanly a man who loves his own country. And I am sure that the Pope will try and. . . would have tried everything in the. . . everything possible to stop an invasion of his homeland.

MARVIN KALB: VO

[OVER ARTILLERY SOUNDS] Time and again the Russians conducted military maneuvers, suggesting an invasion was imminent. The costly, frightening, dangerous maneuvers mirrored the Kremlin's dilemma about Poland. Western intelligence experts now believe that it was then, in the late summer of 1980, that the plot was hatched. ~~REDACTED~~ BREZHNEV exasperated by the Pope, might have uttered the Russian equivalent of, "Will no one rid me of this meddlesome priest?"

MK VO

[OVER APPLAUSE] Not for a moment did the Pope step back from his running confrontation with the Russians. On January 15, 1981, he publicly received Lech Walesa in the Vatican, while privately he approved of plans to send millions of dollars to Solidarity, and to stiffen the spine of the Catholic Church throughout Eastern Europe.

MK VO CONT'D

John Paul called the birth and growth of Solidarity a very extraordinary thing.

(OL)
POPE JOHN PAUL II [THROUGH INTERPRETER]

Solidarity has the enormous task to watch out for the rights of the working class of our fatherland. Poland, as well as any other society and nation, has the right, and an obligation, to strive for this enormous task which faces you. World opinion is in support of you.

MARVIN KALB: (VO)

BREZHNEV

A month later, on February 23, [REDACTED], in somber tones, told a Communist Party Congress that "The pillars of the socialist state were crumbling in Poland." Strong action was required, but he did not define what he had in mind.

Now, for the first time, top Vatican sources have begun, cautiously, to discuss the plot to kill the Pope.

CARDINAL SILVIO ODDI (OC)

[REDACTED]
... I certainly believe that any 007 at the service of any government would have an easy job trying to harm the Pope. If and what secret service did the job, I don't know. We suspect,

✓ ODDi (OC) Cont'd

✓ We think. We are trying to prove.. but we are not certain. We can't say, certainly, such a power did this.

MARVIN KALB (VO)

What do you suspect?

CARDINAL SILVIO ODDI (OC)

[REDACTED]:

You are going too far. [REDACTED] (Laughs)

MARVIN KALB: (VO)

Have I gone too far?

[REDACTED] Alright, let me put the question this way. What possible motives could there be behind the attempt to kill a pope?

Cardinal Silvio Oddi

[REDACTED]: (OC)

I suppose almost anything. It could be fanaticism. Material interests... ^{and} perhaps, and probably more, international political strategy.

MARVIN KALB: VO

Spell that out for me. What do you mean, "international political strategy"?

Cardinal Silvio Oddi (O/C)

[REDACTED]:

What the word means... Political, international, strategy. You understand quite well what I mean.

Oddi o/c cont'd

*we use, when we are judging a crime, yes, 14
'qui prodest'...*

Who is interested in this affair? A private person is not interested, unless he's a fool.

And this man, ^{he} was not a fool. That's proved.

He's an intelligent man. He's a killer, really, a

professional. So, he was certainly acting in the name of others.

~~_____~~

~~_____~~. I am sure that he does not know himself.

MARVIN KALB: (VO)

It is now ^{more than a year} ~~_____~~ since the assassination attempt. The Pope, in this time, has witnessed a martial law crackdown in Poland, engineered by the Soviet Union, and he also suffered a sharp setback last month, when he was refused permission to return to Poland for a major religious and national occasion. More than once the Pope must have wondered how Agca fit into this geopolitical puzzle, how he became a part of Soviet strategy. [CHOIR SINGS]

Act II M.K. VO

[OVER A TURKISH CHANT] The Turkey into which ^{mehmet} ~~_____~~

Ali Agca was born in 1958 was, as always, a careful balancing act between East and West.

It is a Moslem country of 45,000,000 people.

Because of its geography, sitting as it does on the ancient trade routes between Asia and Europe, it is schizophrenic, torn between the competing

MK VO CONT'D

pressures of Islamic fundamentalism and secular democracy. Because of its geography, too, it has often been a target of ^{RUSSIAN} ~~RUSSIAN~~ strategic moves, resulting in thirteen major wars between the two countries in the past 300 years. Part of the reason is that Turkey controls the Dardanelles, Russia's only outlet to the Mediterranean, vital to the import and export of oil, machine tools, and consumer goods. ^(S) Another reason is that Turkey is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, its eastern flank guarded by Turkey's 600,000 troops. Agca never served in the Turkish military, never displayed the traditional Turkish distaste for Russia. In recent years, with weapons and propoganda, the Soviet Union has sought to destabilize Turkey, a huge effort that cost more than \$1 billion, supporting both right- and left-wing terrorism.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

MARVIN KALB: VO

Lenin once said, "The purposes of terror is ~~simply~~ to terrorize." The killing, by first the left and then the right, was widespread. No one was spared--judges, journalists, politicians, policemen. Terrorism became a fulltime occupation. Agca, at a very early age, sucked into its wild currents. Finally, after 10,000 people had been slaughtered in one year, the Turkish military staged a bloodless coup on September 12, 1980, promising that when ^{the} violence stopped, they would return Turkey to civilian rule, and another crack at democracy.

M.K. OC
This, then, was the environment that spawned the likes of ^{Mehmet} ~~Mehmet~~ Ali Agca. The story of Agca is a case study of a modern day terrorist. Bill McLaughlin went back to the beginning, to Agca's birthplace, in the hills of eastern Turkey.

BILL McLAUGHLIN: ~~STET~~ OC

STET
The tortuous Byzantine route that ^{Mehmet} ~~Mehmet~~ Ali Agca took from Turkey to Vatican Square began here, in ^{Malatya} ~~Malatya~~, twenty-four years ago. It was 1958, a quieter time. In Poland, at the age of 38, ^{Karol Wojtyla} ~~Karol Wojtyla~~ became that country's youngest bishop, and here in ^{Malatya Mehmet} ~~Malatya Mehmet~~ Ali Agca was

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born. Their paths would meet when one became a Pope, and the other became a terrorist. [TURKISH CHANT]

Bill McLaughlin VO

mehmet ~~██████~~ Ali Agca heard the call to prayer from the minaret of this mosque five times a day for almost twenty years. One thing we know about him is that he ignored it. ^{agca} ~~██████~~ pretended to be many things to many people, but he never pretended to be religious, much less the sort of crazed Moslem zealot who might be tempted to kill a Christian leader.

^{malatya,}
He grew up here in ~~██████~~ a pleasant, bustling ^{farming community} ~~██████~~ in southeastern Anatolia. ~~██████~~

~~████████████████████~~ The streets of this provincial capital ^{are} ~~████████████████████~~ filled with young boys doing odd jobs to help out their families, just as ^{mehmet} ~~██████~~ Ali, always the dutiful son, used to do when he was their age. [TRAIN WHISTLE]

He lived, literally, on the wrong side of the tracks, in the dirt-poor suburb of ^{yesiltepe} ~~████████████████████~~ where the only running water is the town fountain — ^{and} ~~██████~~ the most common means of transport is on foot or donkey. His family still lives here, but getting to see them is not easy. When we went to No. 13 ^{aycan} ~~██████~~ Street to visit the two-room Agca house, we went with an escort of more than

STET

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BMclaughlin VO cont'd.

a dozen armed men, representing every Turkish civil and military security service. The Turkish government, it appears, wants to be sure that no one visits the Agcas without its knowledge.

Behind the door at No. 13 we found the shattered remains of what used to be a family. ^{Mehmet} Ali's younger sister, Fatma, was somewhere in hiding -- but his mother, ^{Muzeyyen}, was there, along with his 19-year old brother, ^{Adnan}. They were both suspicious, resentful, and bitter.

ADNAN

AGCA: [THROUGH INTERPRETER] *OC*

A priest is wounded and the whole world is excited!

MUZEYYEN

AGCA: [THROUGH INTERPRETER] *OC*

Turkey as well!

ADNAN

AGCA:

It's like the buzzing of a fly to us. We are not afraid of dying. ~~_____~~

MUZEYYEN AGCA *OC*

we are not really living, anyway, without Mehmet Ali, we do not exist.

BILL McLAUGHLIN: *VO*

And there was something else in the younger brother--something behind those same piercing eyes

you see in the photos of ^{Mehmet} ~~Ali~~ Ali, there was a defiant pride.

ADNAN

~~AGCA~~ AGCA:

No one should be ashamed of ^{Mehmet} ~~Ali~~ Ali, saying he wounded the Pope. I don't see my brother as a terrorist, he's a ^{crusader} ~~crusader~~. We are not afraid of anyone when we talk. ^(mother reacts) Why do you look at me like that? Everything is in the open now.

MUZEYYEN

~~AGCA~~ AGCA:

It's out of our hands; it all depends on God.

BILL McLAUGHLIN: 10

Mrs. Agca's grief is real. ^{Mehmet} ~~Ali~~ Ali was her favorite child. She was proud of him. She was proud in the early years when ~~he~~ he went to this one room neighborhood schoolhouse. ^{He} ~~He~~ is remembered here as a very good student, and a hard worker, ~~and~~ neat, clean child. He is also remembered as having been somewhat alcof, as though he felt that he was someone special. But he was also a quiet boy who kept out of trouble.

Keeping out of trouble during those murderous years in Turkey was a fulltime job. Terrorist killings and executions were commonplace.

Malatya, like all of Turkey, was torn apart by the terror of the Red and the Black. Marxists and Fascists fought each other, and fought for the hearts and minds of young Turks. On the far right, there was this man—Colonel Ardaslan Turkes. His Neo-Nazi National Action Party had its own private army of young terrorists. They were called, "the Gray Wolves." They not only fought street battles with the Left, they also tried to infiltrate every sector of Turkish society. [REDACTED]

BILL McLAUGHLIN: VO

The Gray Wolves took over Agca's high school during his last two years there. He was friendly with some of them, but never a member. He remained aloof. The Left also had a strong power base in Malatya. One of its leaders was Teslim Tore. His name is worth remembering. Like

BILL MCLAUGHLIN VO cont

Agca, Tore was born in Malatya... and founded the Turkish People's Liberation Army -- a Marxist terrorist organization. Later Tore moved to SYria and Lebanon, where Turkish and Israeli intelligence believe he worked for this man, Vladimir Soldatov, the Soviet ambassador to Lebanon, and the chief KGB agent in the area.

Ankara, Turkey's capital was the next step in Agca's coming of age as a professional terrorist.

Our intelligence sources believe that before leaving home for Ankara, Agca had already been recruited by a clandestine organization. He got to Ankara in 1976 by supposedly passing an extremely difficult university entrance exam. Later he told his family he didn't like Ankara and wanted to study economics at Istanbul University. Again, he took and passed an equally difficult exam, or did he.

No one from Agca's village had ever passed those exams before. The local high school was second-rate by Turkish standards so we asked the question, was it possible that someone else had taken those exams for Agca. One of Turkey's most respected legal experts, Dr. Sahir Erman, is convinced that is what happened.

Agca's place. Professor Sahir Erman.^{sh?}

~~SA~~ OC
SAHIR ERMAN: [THROUGH INTERPRETER]

In our country, that examination is very, very difficult. Even those who come from first rate schools and hold advanced diplomas can't pass this exam easily. It's impossible that it was ~~Mehmet~~ Ali Agca in person who took the examinations. It must be someone else--another young man who took the exams using ~~Mehmet~~ Ali Agca's name and, since he was well prepared, he passed both times. That shows, too, that there was an organization. Why? To get him out of his military service, first of all, and then so that he could contribute to the terrorism which was growing at that time, especially in the Turkish universities. So that organization had to have a man like Memit Ali Agca in a Turkish university.

BILL McLAUGHLAN: VO

Dr. Erman requested copies of the exams Agca was said to have taken to compare the handwriting. Inexplicably, the records had been destroyed. And according to Agca's own testimony in Rome, confirmed by Turkish intelligence, part of the time he said he was attending university he was actually training at a PLO camp in Lebanon, thanks

to his mentor, Teslim Tore.

AGCA STATEMENT: "After secretly training as guerrilla for about 40 days south of Beirut. I returned again to Turkey with the help of Teslim Tore."

MCLAUGHLIN VO (Gunshots) In the spring of 1977, when he was 19 years old, Agca said he crossed secretly into Syria...and was taken by Teslim Tore to a guerrilla camp like this one south of Beirut. The camp Agca attended was run by the pro-Soviet Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Teslim Tore brought hundreds of Turks, like Agca, to Lebanon for terrorist training. It is now clear that a few months after that training in December, 1977 Agca was on someone's secret payroll. These bank account records prove that at the age of 19, the poor student from Malatya was in fact a well-paid member of a clandestine organization. The first entry, for 40,000 Turkish lire (about \$2,000) was deposited by someone claiming to be Agca, except it wasn't Agca's signature. It was Dr. Erman who requested and got the bank records.

SAHIR ERMAN OC Through interpreter

The signature when the account was opened and the signature for the withdrawal were not the same. Someone went to the bank under the name of Mehmet Ali Agca, giving false addresses -- addresses that do not exist in Istanbul. They are imaginary addresses.

BILL McLAUGHLIN: VO

Agca's sponsors set up accounts for him in several Turkish banks. It was a convenient and safe way to transfer funds to Agca. It is estimated that over a twelve month period, Agca was paid at least \$18,000. After moving to Istanbul, Agca had plenty of money to spend in the bazaar... and it ~~seems~~ ^{seems} he spent a considerable time creating "the cover" of a student interested in right-wing politics. He became expert at negotiating the back alleys of the old Byzantine ~~capital~~ ^{capital}. Agca hung out at the ~~Hanra~~ ^{Hanra} Cafe, a favorite watering hole for the Gray Wolves. It was also frequented by members of the Turkish Mafia, who had close ties to Bulgarian intelligence.

This, then, was Agca's world in Istanbul. A world of left- and right-wing extremists, of arms smugglers, ~~drug~~ ^{drug} dealers, and secret agents, making deals in cheap cafes. It was the start of 1979, and Agca was ready for his first big job.

Bill McL OC
Mehmet
This is ~~where~~ ^{where} Ali Agca committed his first murder. This is where he shot and killed Turkey's best known editor, Abdi ~~Ipekci~~ ^{Ipekci}, but why Ipekci? He was a loud voice in Turkey for reason and moderation. He was a voice ~~that~~ ^{that} spoke out against terrorism, and

Bill McL OC cont'd.

~~that~~ spoke with a pro-Western accent. *Ipekci* ~~that~~

was a progressive liberal. He was despised by the Right, but had angered the Left by coming out in favor of martial law to stop terrorism.

He was outspoken in his beliefs. Someone decided that *Ipekci* ~~that~~ had to be silenced. Agca silenced

Ipekci ~~that~~ riddling his body and his car with bullets on the evening of February 1, 1979. *Ipekci's*

murder, announced by his own newspaper, ~~that~~ *Milliyet* sent shockwaves throughout Turkey. There was national revulsion and anger. ~~that~~

~~that~~ *Ipekci's* murder, whether by the Right or the Left, was a brutal act of terrorism that further destabilized Turkey. A *nation-wide* manhunt for his killer ended on June 25.

An anonymous tip led ~~that~~ police to Agca, who freely admitted that he was the assassin. In a televised news conference, Agca insisted that he ~~that~~ acted alone.

Mehmet
~~that~~ ALI AGCA:

[In Turkish].

BILL McLAUGHLIN: *VO*

But he did not act alone. NBC News has obtained these *bank* records, *which show that* Agca was paid 200,000 Turkish *lira* (worth \$10,000 at the time), two months before the *murder*. The money was deposited in his name in a bank near Istanbul.

It was withdrawn a month later *on* January 4, 1979 ... in *Malatya*. The payment reinforces the image of Agca as a *cold-blooded* killer for hire--a terrorist without ideology.

In addition, eleven days later, on January 15, 1979, Agca's mother, *Muzeyyen*, opened an account in her name for 100,000 Turkish lira, worth \$5,000 at the time. When I asked Mrs. Agca and *Adnan* about the bank accounts, they were both firm in their denials.

Mehmet
What banks did *Mehmet* Ali use here in town?

Muzeyyen *Adnan*
Muzeyyen AND *Adnan* AGCA:

[IN TURKISH]

INTERPRETER:

She says that she has no bank, no account.

BILL McLAUGHLIN:

I don't mean now; I mean years ago. Before.

INTERPRETER:

[IN TURKISH]

AGCAS:

[UNINTELLIGIBLE]. . .

BILL McLAUGHLIN: VO

[REDACTED]

The family, it appears, is still trying to cover up ^{Helmet} [REDACTED] Ali Agca's covert bank accounts.

And Agca was not alone even while awaiting trial for the ^{Tpekci} [REDACTED] murder in the maximum security ^{Kartel - Haltepe} [REDACTED] Prison. On the night of November 24, 1979, Agca, wearing a military uniform, passed through eight checkpoints to a waiting car.

His escape, from Turkey's Alcatraz, is still a mystery, ^{with an intriguing question mark} [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

could ^{it have been related to the plot} [REDACTED] to the plot to kill the Pope?

Francesco Mazza/a

[THROUGH INTERPRETER]

Helping a well-known killer like Agca escape can be part of an operation in which Agca can successfully be used as a tool, as a killer. It is possible that the idea of the assassination came

in stages. What does appear certain is that when Agca escaped, he escaped for the purpose of using him later for some sort of operation, not necessarily for this one, but simply to make available for use a killer who had already committed a homicide and who was notorious for his coldbloodedness.

BILL McLAUGHLIN:

The day after his escape ^{from prison} Agca wrote a letter to ^{Ipekci's} newspaper. The young terrorist, who cared little for religion and who was rarely seen inside a mosque, threatened to kill Pope John Paul II during his visit to Turkey. The Pope arrived in Turkey two days later. [PROCESSIONAL MUSIC] Because of Agca's threat, the Turkish government ordered extraordinary security measures for the Pontiff's visit. ~~_____~~
~~_____~~
~~_____~~

~~_____~~—As for Agca, he later claimed that his threat had merely been a diversion to confuse the Turkish police and allow him to escape from the country. Perhaps. Or perhaps Agca had established a new ^{cover} ~~_____~~ ^{as} the religious zealot who wanted to kill a Pope.

The Turkish phase of Agca's life was over.

He was now an international terrorist.

Act III

MARVIN KALB:

For the next six months, Agca's trail is difficult to follow. He said that, for a time, he went to Iran--even named the hotels, but this cannot be confirmed. *Turkish and Italian?* ~~_____~~ intel-
ligence say he might also have gone to Syria for *guerrilla* ~~_____~~ training, but this cannot be confirmed either. The trail only becomes clearer in July, 1980, when *he* ~~_____~~ surfaced ~~_____~~ in Bulgaria, Turkey's next door neighbor.

For the believing Communist, Bulgaria must be God's Little Acre--a tightly run dictatorship on a short leash to Moscow, responsible in recent years for *guerrilla* ~~_____~~ training and sanctuary. Courage and political independence are not its hallmarks. No foreigner, especially a known Turkish terrorist on the lam, could spend seven weeks in the best hotels in *Sofia* ~~_____~~ without the knowledge and approval of the Bulgarian secret service. Agca, by his own testimony, arrived in *Sofia* ~~_____~~ between July 10th and 15th, and checked into the modern Hotel Vitosha.

In Room 911, he met a fellow Turk, Omer Mersan, who helped Agca get a passport, containing his photograph but using the name of *Faruk Ozgun* the same passport Agca carried when arrested in St. Peter's Square. Agca also claimed that he bought a gun here, but this does not check out, and that he met a mysterious agent named *Mustafaeof* here. This does not check out either. But Omer Mersan does check out.

He was at the time, [REDACTED] a key figure in a huge drug-smuggling and gun-running operation, controlled Mafia-style by yet another Turk, *Abuzer Ugurlu* known as "The Godfather". *Ugurlu*, charged with weapons and drug smuggling, is now on trial in Turkey, even though he runs his thriving illegal business out of Bulgaria and travels on a Bulgarian passport. Agca claimed that he had met *Ugurlu* in *Sofia* a claim Italian investigators believe, even though *Ugurlu* denied it. In a fashion both quixotic and profitable, Communist Bulgaria cooperates with this Turkish Mafia, behind the gray facade of *Kintex* which is Bulgaria's export/import corporation. Ugor *Humcu* a Turkish expert on Bulgaria's middleman role between the drug pushers of the East and the gun dealers of the West.

Act III

Uyar
Mumcu

Bulgaria is on the highway that connects Turkey to Europe. For this reason it is involved in the smuggling network. Bulgaria is not only the center of weapons smuggling, but also is the center for the smuggling of electronic equipment and other contraband. The Turkish mafia is responsible for the smuggling originating in Bulgaria and therefore it would be right to claim that there is collusion between the Bulgarian authorities and members of the Turkish mafia based in Bulgaria.

MARVIN KALB:

It is not hard to spot. The border between Turkey and Bulgaria is a busy crossroads--mostly Turks with money crossing into Bulgaria for a cheap holiday -- some with drugs. On the Turkish side, the police check is comparatively casual... ^{even} for the big trucks of the Bulgarian International Auto Transport, carrying, among other things, weapons into Turkey, a veritable supermarket of guns, rifles, and grenade launchers.

Agca depended on the Turkish gun-runners for a passport and for protection in a Communist satellite. Could the Bulgarian security service have

provided that and operated without the knowledge of the Soviet KGB? Only if you believe in fairytales. Vladimir Sakharov, a KGB agent who defected.

VLADIMIR SAKHAROV:

Soviet KGB must know, and they do, what the Bulgarian secret service does at all times. Bulgarian service is ^{must} tightly controlled than. . . it is as close to the Soviet KGB as you can be.

MARVIN KALB:

By the time Agca left Bulgaria for Western Europe on August 31, it seems safe to conclude that he had been drawn into the clandestine network of the Bulgarian secret police and, by extension, the Soviet KGB -- perhaps without him even being aware of their possible plans for him.

[TURKISH CHANTS] These Turks are in West Germany, where Agca spent most of the fall and winter, part of that time here in West Berlin, where the Turkish quarter nestles up against the Berlin wall. There are in West Germany 1.6 million Turkish workers, the so-called "guest workers," cheap labor to help fuel the German economy. For a known fugitive, no other country on the

MK Cont'd.

continent provided better cover, especially during Agca's early exposure to the West. He hid among his hardworking countrymen, most of whom were probably frightened by the young killer, or indifferent. Some clearly helped-- with money, sanctuary, and intelligence. They were members of the ^{Grey} ~~███~~ Wolves, the same fanatical fascists who terrorized Turkey and who now honeycombed the Turkish community in West Germany, selling heroin and hashish smuggled to them by the Turkish Mafia and, with the profits, buying the guns, then transhipped through Bulgaria to Turkey. The ^{Grey} ~~███~~ Wolves, also known as the National Action Party, the MHP, functioned in part as a kind of Western branch office of the Turkish Mafia.

Ali ^{Yurtaslan} ~~██████~~, a defector, directly links Agca to the ^{Grey} ~~███~~ Wolves in West Germany. Ali ^{Yurtaslan} ~~██████~~, a defector from the ^{Grey} ~~███~~ Wolves, named ^{Abuzer Ugunlu} ~~██████████~~ as the top man in this farflung smuggling operation which, he said, helped Agca.

Ali Yurtaslan

I know this fact beyond any doubt. The gray wolves arranged mehmet ali agca's escape from prison in turkey and his subsequent safe passage to Europe and Germany. The people who arranged Agca's escape obtained a false passport for him and provided him with money. After his arrival in Europe, Agca was employed by the Grey Wolves [REDACTED] as a tough who was used to intimidate ^{THEIR} opponents [REDACTED].

MARVIN KALB:

Four times in this mercurial environment, Agca was spotted by unsympathetic Turks who had apparently seen his photograph in the German edition of the popular Turkish newspaper ^{Hillier's} [REDACTED] -- on October 3, 1980, in Frankfurt; on November 6th and December 11th in West Berlin. ^{And in yet another place, on December 29th} Turkish diplomats were informed of these sightings. They promptly informed West German authorities. Four times, the Germans claimed they tried, but failed to catch Agca.

[BAND MUSIC] Often Agca slipped across the border into Zurich, where there was also a large Turkish community. Many of the fascist ^{Grey} Wolves had settled in Switzerland after West Germany [REDACTED] tightened its visa regulations. Again, Agca lost himself in a gallery of Turkish faces. According

MARVIN KALB cont

to Vatican sources, it was here in Switzerland as well as in West Germany., that Agca received spending money -- lots of it. By the time he reached St. Peter's Square, he had spent an estimated \$50,000, never once cashing a check.

Twice Agca stayed at the Hotel Rutli--from September 9-12, 1980. Again, on April 31, 1981. It's assumed from here he met his contacts in Zurich. Agca, as far as we know, never visited this unstore in Zurich -- huttered against intruders, but the gun that was used to shoot the Pope was purchased here on July 9, 1980 -- a .9 mm Browning automatic -- one of 21 weapons smuggled illegally into Austria into the hands of Horst Grillmeier, the son of a known Nazi and an associate of the Turkish smuggler, Ugurly. Interestingly, four days after the shooting in St. Peter's Square on May 17, 1981, Grillmeier disappeared.

Agca also spent time in Olten, a buburb of Zurich which has become a haven for the Grey Wolves. One of them, Omer Bagci, a 36-year old contact to Grillmeier, was arrested by Swiss police operating on a tip from Italian investigators. Bagci was charged with passing the Browning automatic to Agca in Milan -- which is what Agca recently told the investigators. They want Bagci to be extradicted to Italy. He isnow locked in the Regensdorf Prison near Zurich, one key element in a reopened investigation of the Agca crime.

ACT IV

MARVIN KALB:

Buy the time Agca reached Italy in early April, 1981, he began to operate like a terrorist with a mission, a deadline -- no longer just a killer on ice, on the run. On April 8, he arrived in Perugia, a university town in central Italy. Normally, a tourist from the Middle East gets a one month visa. Agca, for his purposes, needed more time -- and a different kind of cover. He decided to get a three-month student residence permit. Agca stayed first at the Hotel Posta, temporary home for many foreigners. I talked with the manager.

Kalb Cont'd.

I'm trying to trace the name of the man who checked into this hotel. . . He checked into this hotel on April 8, 1981.

HOTEL MANAGER:

[IN ITALIAN].

MARVIN KALB:

Yes. And his name is *Faruk Ozgun* [VOICEOVER: *OC* The name on his fake passport.] Would you be able to check your books and see what. . .

[VOICEOVER: The manager checked the hotel's registration book for 1981. Her pen found the name.] Here. He was here from the 8th to the 10th of April, 1981. Having come from Turkey. Passport #136635; August 11, 1980 was when it was issued.

On April 9th, Agca enrolled at the University for Foreigners. The fee? \$210. He got the student permit he needed, and the name he used was dutifully listed in proper alphabetical order in a computerized printout.

On April 10th, he attended one class, in Beginner's Italian. Never showed up again.

mk cont'd. VO

On April 13th, using his student permit to deflect any possible suspicion, Agca checked into the Hotel Torino in Rome. He placed what West German police termed "a long and expensive telephone call" to Sarst^{edt} near Hanover and talked with Hasan Taskin, a member of the ~~Grey~~ Wolves. The call was not tapped, and its contents not known, but it demonstrated that Agca's ties to the ~~Grey~~ Wolves continued into this critical period.

Milan--under the dome of the Galleria, the elegant beefy cafe where Agca had been spotted a few months before. Now on April 23rd, he returned to Milan to the Condor Travel Agency to buy a two-week honeymooners' tour of Majorca. [MUSIC]

Agca went alone. A guest at the luxurious Hotel Flamboyant. Every morning he jogged for two hours on the beach. Italian investigators now believe that it was in this setting that a ~~Grey~~ Wolf courier offered Agca three million Deutschmarks to kill the Pope, plus sanctuary in Bulgaria.

The courier is said to have taken his orders from a Turkish businessman in London named Bekir Celest, who, in turn, took his order from ~~Ughu~~, head of the Turkish Mafia who, in turn, collaborated with the Bulgarians in a number of dark activities. This complex layering of responsibility,

Kalb cont'd.

this deliberate distancing of one level of authority from another, is said to be typical of the highly professional operation of the Soviet KGB.

On May 9th, Agca returned to Milan and went to the railroad station. In a very obvious place, the left luggage department, he is supposed to have picked up the gun left there by the courier *Bagci* who, as we know, is now in a Swiss prison.

On May 10th, Agca left for Rome where he checked a small satchel containing his gun in the railroad luggage department.

On May 12th, Agca checked into the Pensione *Isa*, a ten minute walk from St. Peter's Square. The room clerk remembers Agca.

ROOM CLERK:

He was not talking a lot; just a "Good Morning," "Good Evening," asking for the key, that's all.

Bill Tursue

[NBC]:

Did he seem calm, or nervous?

ROOM CLERK:

No. Always very calm. Always. Now, [unintelligible]. . . even too much. Maybe. And even. . .

He was not used to have breakfast. Or wherever he paid for it.

Biltmore

~~_____~~ [NBC]:

Did you ever see him with anybody, or talking to anybody?

ROOM CLERK:

Always alone. Always alone.

MARVIN KALB:

-- Agca's room looked, ironically, like a monk's cell. On May 13th, Agca got up at 7:00 A.M., left his room by 9:00, walked through Rome; in his pocket was a handwritten list of things to remember. Among them, "Be careful of the food." And "If necessary, wear a cross around your neck." Until 4:00 P.M.--when he entered St. Peter's Square for the Pope's Wednesday audience. At 5:17 P.M., Agca shot the Pope.

These days, at his general audiences, the Pope seems like a tired man--different, his aides say, from the bubbling activist who inspired and helped negotiate the birth of Solidarity in his beloved Poland. The bullets from Agca's gun did not kill him, but they seemed to have wounded his spirit, the sense of fire and mission. Now

he is a surrounded man; security everywhere. His hallelujah people are checked and double-checked, not allowed to get close until they've walked through metal detectors, have their pockets and purses examined. St. Peter's--suddenly outfitted like an airport, filled with modern day fears about terrorism.

Agca's gun has changed John Paul's world, in the process, scaling down his once high expectations for Poland. Last December, he watched, helpless, while his cherished Solidarity was crushed. Last month he watched, just as helpless, while pro-Solidarity demonstrations were suppressed. The Pope could not even attend a major religious service in Poland. The Russians had checkmated the Pope.

STAT

According to Vatican, American, European, and Turkish intelligence, the evidence suggests the possibility that the Russians hatched the plot against the Pope, or, at a minimum, knew about the plot and did nothing to stop it--believing at a moment of desperate illusion that without the Pope's unique support, the running rebellion in Poland could soon be contained. Shocking though this possibility may be, the idea of a

superpower considering assassination as an instrument of national policy is not a Soviet monopoly. The United States, over the years, has also resorted to it. Just recall the plots against Lumumba of the Congo, Castro of Cuba, and possibly ~~Khadifi~~ of Libya. But there is a special evil that highlights this example of state-sponsored terrorism because it was directed not against a politician, but against a Pope. And for reasons ranging from coverup to national self-interest, a curtain of silence has descended over this crime. Terrorism is part of the explanation; it has become a way of life. Governments adjust to it, bending every rule of principle and protocol just to survive.

KALB VO: [CHILDREN TALKING] Even the Pope, to a degree, bends to its forbidding pressures. He has, as a man of God, forgiven Agca. His closest aides say he wants to forget about the whole thing. But they also say that he cannot forget because, deep down, the Pope is described by those who know him best as believing that the Russians were behind Agca's attempt to kill him and that they may try again. I am Marvin Kalb, NBC News.

END OF PROGRAM.

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UPDATE - AS PRESENTED ON NBC ²⁵~~27~~ JAN 1983

NBC WHITE PAPER - THE MAN WHO SHOT THE POPE - A STUDY IN TERRORISM

Tease

MARVIN KALB: (Vo)

It happened on May 13, 1981 on a warm Wednesday afternoon. An unsuspecting Rome sparkled in the sunlight, each of its fountains a silent witness to other intrigues. The dome of St. Peter's dominated the skyline of the Eternal City. It was exactly 5:17 P.M. The Pope, riding in his white Jeep through the crowded square, had just opened his general audience, blessing a young girl and waving to the faithful. Then, suddenly, a hand, a gun, and a volley of fire. The Pope slumped, hit by two bullets. By attempting to kill the spiritual leader of 800,000,000 Catholics, the gunman had committed a monstrous crime--an unprecedented act of terrorism that also wounded two American tourists, innocent bystanders. There was in St. Peter's Square horror and disbelief. Who would want to shoot a Pope? The gunman turned out to be a 23-year old Turk, Mehmet Ali Agca, a professional killer wanted for murder in Turkey. He seemed, under the circumstances, remarkably cocky.

AGCA: (Vo)

I am very sorry two tourists wounded.

tourists, but not about having shot the Pope.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE:

Why did you do it?

MERVIN KALF

At the time, many people rushed to glib judgements about Agca, but only a handful of Italian officials had an inkling of a Bulgarian connection, and they quickly covered up the evidence. The court concluded that Agca was part of a conspiracy, but few chose to pursue the obvious leads. For more than a year a strange curtain of silence fell over the crime. The silence ended last Fall. In part because NBC's report encouraged others to follow the story. Then a confirming bombshell. On November 25th, Italian police arrested a Bulgarian, Sergei Ivanovich Antonov, described as head of the Bulgarian Airline office in Rome, on charges of active complicity in the attempted assassination.

Question: If Bulgaria is involved, could the Soviet Union also be involved? The question is diplomatic dynamite because Yuri Andropov, the Soviet leader, was head of the KGB when the plot was hatched. In this case, the smoking gun, so to speak, may never be found. In the high risk world of international terrorism, deniability is crucial and expected and responsibility is always carefully laundered. For the next hour, join us on the dramatic odyssey, retracing the steps of the man who shot the Pope.

Act I

MARVIN KALB: (V0)

It is said of John Paul II that he is happiest on Wednesday afternoons--when he emerges from the inner sanctum of the Vatican and mingles with thousands in St. Peter's Square. His general audiences, though jampacked and public, still have a touch of intimacy about them. The priest

in this Pope communes with individuals in the crowd--each, to him, a precious gift from God. He stops, he chats, he jokes, he prays, he touches, almost always with a gentle smile. These are his hallelujah people--his emotional flock. [VOICES OF THE CROWD IN BACKGROUND.]

(B) John Paul is special. He is the first non-Italian Pope in 455 years, the first Slavic-born successor to St. Peter. He is conservative in theology, daring in his Polish politics, though now more cautious. Indeed, his nationalism has become indistinguishable from his Catholicism. During this time of trouble they have, for John Paul, become one. It is a dangerous combination.

It is now clear from chance photographs taken just seconds before the shooting that Agca did not act alone. At first it was believed that Agca had one Turkish accomplice, possibly two, who were with him in St. Peter's Square. The man on Agca's right has been identified by Turkish police as Omer AY, whose fake passport was produced on the same day and in the same place as Agca's. The other suspected accomplice, photographed after the shooting by an American tourist, has not yet been identified. Agca claimed that he was also helped by two Bulgarians who were in or near St. Peter's Square.

Italian authorities decided over the past weekend to hold one of the Bulgarians, Antonov, in prison pending his trial.

[OVER ITALIAN VOICE] For Italy, Agca's trial was uncharacteristically brief--three days, starting July 20, 1981--almost as if someone wanted to sweep it under the rug.

MARVIN KALB: √0

~~_____~~
~~_____~~
~~_____~~
~~_____~~ The presiding judge, SEVERINO SANTIAPICHI, in his first public comments on the case, marveled at Agca's mental agility.

SEVERINO SANTIAPICHI
JUDGE ~~_____~~: [THROUGH INTERPRETER] (you oc?)

One thing is certain--that all the interrogations of Agca reveal a lucidity and an ability, an exceptional ability of his, to mislead the investigations, and to direct the particular investigator, which presumes either a personal and natural capacity, or a specific schooling in this matter.

MARVIN KALB: (√0)

Agca, in a signed statement, mixed fact with fiction, throughout suggesting that he yearned

MK VO Cont'd

for some kind of international notoriety. For what, he did not say. What he did say revealed a chilling cast of mind. "I'm an international terrorist," he said. "Ready to help other terrorists everywhere. I make no distinction between fascists or communists. The international terrorist, as I see it, is not bothered by ideological labels. He has confidence in guns, and that's enough." [Prosecuting Attorney - Italian].

MK VO
But to a prosecuting attorney, and others the evidence from the beginning pointed to a conspiracy

OC Nicola Amato

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER [PROSECUTING ATTORNEY?]
[THROUGH INTERPRETER]

I believe that there was a plot behind Agca's criminal gesture. A plot hatched in other places, hatched by other brains. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(OC) SEVERINO SANTAPICHI

The court, however, maintains that Agca was manipulated--trained, directed, helped and subsidized to kill the Pope. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

MARVIN KALB: (VO)

Francesco Mazzola, head of State Security at the time of the shooting, found the possible motive for the crime in Eastern Europe.

mazzola: (OC)

FRANCESCO ~~MAZZOLA~~ [THROUGH INTERPRETER]

The suspicion which arises is that the Pope was targeted not so much because he was the head of Christianity, but because he was a Polish Pope, at the moment when, in Poland, there was on one hand a big revival of Catholicism, and on the other the link between this religious revival and the Solidarity Union in confrontation with the Communist state, and above all with the Soviet Union.

MARVIN KALB: (VO)

[OVER CHURCH CHOIR] Victory Square, Warsaw, June 2, 1979. Eight months after becoming Pope, John Paul returned to Poland--the start of an electrifying visit. More than just a hometown boy who made good, John Paul seemed to personify Poland, a magical link between church and state that left little room for the commissars. With his presence and his prayers, the Pope unified the Polish people--a modern day Becket, challenging the very legitimacy of Marxist rule. The Pope's

MK (VO) Cont'd.

blending of religion with nationalism proved to be a heady mix for the people of Poland who suddenly realized that, for all their vulnerabilities, they now had a trusted friend in Rome, one of their very own, who was not afraid of the Russians, and who ~~was~~ commanded vast legions throughout the world. ^(R) The fact is John Paul, with this visit, inspired his countrymen to dream the impossible dream that one day they would be free.

[CROWD CHEERS] And for a brief time, they dreamed and acted and won a measure of freedom, encouraged every step of the way by the Pope's defiance of Soviet warnings.

NAT SOT - gdansk WORKERS' STRIKE?

(mk VO)

→ In August, 1980, the workers in Gdansk led a series of crippling strikes. They demanded fundamental reforms--freedom of speech and assembly, an independent trade union, an unfettered church. In the Communist world, these demands were unprecedented. A crackdown seemed inevitable--if not by Polish authorities, then by the Soviet Army, intervening in Poland, as it had in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and East Germany in earlier times.

MK-OC

But it didn't happen that way, in part, because of the crucial secret role played by the Pope, first disclosed by NBC news last September.

MX OC Cont'd

In early August¹⁹⁸⁰ as the crisis escalated, the Pope sent an envoy to the Kremlin whom we are pledged not to identify. He delivered an extraordinary handwritten letter, in Russian, from the Pope to Soviet leader ~~Brezhnev~~ ^{Brezhnev, then head of the Soviet Union.} It said that though the Pope was the head of a universal church, he was still a Pole, and deeply affected by developments in Poland. And if the

Russians moved against Poland, the Pope would leave the Vatican and return to Poland and stand shoulder to shoulder with his people. This letter could have struck Brezhnev as an intolerable intrusion by the Church into the State affairs of Eastern Europe.

In any case, the Russians yielded to this implied threat, or so it seemed at the time. Strike leader Lech Walesa signed the historic Gdansk Agreement setting up the first independent trade union in a communist country. It survived for 16 months. A Vatican insider, American-born ~~MONSIEUR HILARY~~ ^{MONSIEUR HILARY} Franc

MONSIGNOR HILARY

~~FRANCO~~ FRANCO: (OC)

I do believe that, even though the Pope belongs to the world, he's humanly a man who loves his own country. And I am sure that the Pope will try and. . . would have tried ~~everything~~ in the. . . everything possible to stop an invasion of his homeland.

MARVIN KALB: VO

[OVER ARTILLERY SOUNDS] Time and again the Russians conducted military maneuvers, suggesting an invasion was imminent. The costly, frightening, dangerous maneuvers mirrored the Kremlin's dilemma about Poland. Western intelligence experts now believe that it was then, in the late summer of 1980, that the plot was hatched. ~~BREZHNEV~~ ^{BREZHNEV} exasperated by the Pope, might have uttered the Russian equivalent of, "Will no one rid me of this meddling priest?"

MK VO

[OVER APPLAUSE] Not for a moment did the Pope step back from his running confrontation with the Russians. On January 15, 1981,

he received Lech Walesa in the Vatican and promised Solidarity his full support.

It has now been learned that Agca met with the Bulgarian Antonov at this Hotel Archimede, right here near the railroad station in downtown Rome. Agaca said they discussed a plan to assassinate Walesa. But so far as we know, for whatever reason, the attempt never took place.

Top Vatican sources now have for the first time begun to discuss the plot to kill the Pope.....

CARDINAL SILVIO ODDI (OC)

. . . I certainly believe that any @07 at the service of any government would have an easy job trying to harm the Pope. If and what secret service did the job, I don't know. We suspect,

✓ ODDi (OC) CONT'D

We think. We are trying to prove..but we are not certain. We can't say, certainly, such a power did this.

MARVIN KALB (VO)

What do you suspect?

CARDINAL SILVIO ODDI (OC)

~~_____~~:

You are going too far. ~~_____~~ (Laughs)

MARVIN KALB: (VO)

~~_____~~ let me put the question this way. What possible motives could there be behind the attempt to kill a pope?

Cardinal Silvio Oddi

~~_____~~: (OC)

I suppose almost anything. It could be fanaticism. Material interests... ~~and~~ perhaps, and probably more, international political strategy.

MARVIN KALB: VO

Spell that out for me. What do you mean, "international political strategy"?

Cardinal Silvio Oddi (OC)

~~_____~~:

What the word means... Political, international, strategy. You understand quite well what I mean.

Oddi o/c would

we use, when we are judging a crime, yes, ~~we~~
'ui prodest'...

Who is interested in this affair? A private person is not interested, unless he's a fool.

And this man, ^{he} was not a fool. That's proved.

He's an intelligent man. He's a killer, really.

^a professional. So, he was certainly acting in the name of others.

~~_____~~

~~_____~~. I am sure that he does not know himself.

MARVIN KALB: (Vo)

It is now ^{more than a year} ~~_____~~ since the assassination attempt. The Pope, in this time, has witnessed a martial law crackdown in Poland and the banning of his cherished Solidarity. Even his forthcoming visit to Poland in June is now in doubt. Largely because of a blistering Soviet propaganda campaign against him.

More than once the Pope must have wondered how Agca fit into this geopolitical puzzle, how he became a part of Soviet strategy. [CHOIR SINGS]

Act II M.K. Vo

[OVER A TURKISH CHANT] The Turkey into which ^{Mehmet} ~~_____~~

~~_____~~ Ali Agca was born in 1958 was, as always,

a careful balancing act between East and West.

It is a Moslem country of 45,000,000 people.

Because of its geography, sitting as it does on

the ancient trade routes between Asia and Europe,

it has often been a target of Russian strategic moves, resulting 13 major wars between the two countries in the past 300 years. In recent years, with weapons and propaganda, the Soviet Union has sought to destabilize Turkey, a huge effort that cost more than \$1 billion, supporting both right and left wing terrorism. The killing by, first the left and then the right, was widespread. No one was spared: judges, journalists, politicians, policemen. Terrorism became a full-time occupation. Agca, at a very early age sucked into its wild currents.

The story of Agca is a case study of a modern day terrorist. Bill McLaughlin went back to the beginning, to Agca's birthplace, in the hills of eastern Turkey.

BILL McLAUGHLIN: DC

The tortuous Byzantine route that ^{Mehmet} ~~Ali~~ Ali Agca took from Turkey to Vatican Square began here, ^{Malatya} in ~~Malatya~~, twenty-four years ago. It was 1958, a quieter time. In Poland, at the age of 38, ^{Karol Wojtyla} ~~Karol Wojtyla~~ became that country's youngest ^{Malatya, Mehmet} bishop, and here in ~~Malatya~~ Ali Agca was

born. Their paths would meet when one became a Pope, and the other became a terrorist. [TURKISH CHANT]

Bill McLaughlin VO

mehmet ~~Agca~~ Ali Agca heard the call to prayer from the minaret of this mosque five times a day for almost twenty years. One thing we know about him is that he ignored it. ^{Agca} ~~Agca~~ pretended to be many things to many people, but he never pretended to be religious, much less the sort of crazed Moslem zealot who might be tempted to kill a Christian leader.

^{Malatya,}
He grew up here in ~~Agca~~ a pleasant, bustling farming community in southeastern Anatolia. ~~Agca~~

~~Agca~~ The streets of this provincial capital ^{are} ~~Agca~~ filled with young boys doing odd jobs to help out their families, just as ^{mehmet} ~~Agca~~ Ali, always the dutiful son, used to do when he was their age. [TRAIN WHISTLE]

He lived, literally, on the wrong side of the tracks, in the dirt-poor suburb of ^{Yasiltepe} ~~Agca~~ where the only running water is the town fountain — ~~Agca~~ the most common means of transport is on foot or donkey. His family still lives here, but

getting to see them is not easy. When we went to No. 13 ^{Agca} ~~Agca~~ Street to visit the two-room Agca house, we went with an escort of more than

BMclaughlin VO cont'd.

a dozen armed men, representing every Turkish civil and military security service. The Turkish government, it appears, wants to be sure that no one visits the Agcas without its knowledge.

Behind the door at No. 13 we found the shattered remains of what used to be a family. ^{Helmet} ~~Ali's~~ Ali's younger sister, Fatma, was somewhere in hiding-- but his mother, ^{Muzeyyen} ~~Agca~~, was there, along with his 19-year old brother, ^{Adnan} ~~Agca~~. They were both suspicious, resentful, and bitter.

ADNAN

~~Agca~~ AGCA: [THROUGH INTERPRETER] OC

A priest is wounded and the whole world is excited!

MUZEYYEN

~~Agca~~ AGCA: [THROUGH INTERPRETER] OC

Turkey as well!

ADNAN

~~Agca~~ AGCA:

It's like the buzzing of a fly to us. We are not afraid of dying. ~~Agca~~

MUZEYYEN AGCA OC

we are not really living anyway, without Helmet Ali, we do not exist.

BILL MCLAUGHLIN: VO

And there was something else in the younger brother--something behind those same piercing eyes

you see in the photos of ^{Mehmet} ~~Ali~~ Ali -- there was a defiant pride.

ADNAN

~~ADNAN~~ AGCA:

No one should be ashamed of ^{Mehmet} ~~Ali~~ Ali, saying he wounded the Pope. I don't see my brother as a terrorist, he's a ^{crusader} ~~terrorist~~. We are not afraid of anyone when we talk. ^(mother reacts) Why do you look at me like that? Everything is in the open now.

MUZEYYEN

~~MUZEYYEN~~ AGCA:

It's out of our hands; it all depends on God.

BILL McLAUGHLIN: VO

Mrs. Agca's grief is real. ^{Mehmet} ~~Ali~~ Ali was her favorite child. She was proud of him. She was proud in the early years when ^{he} he went to this one room neighborhood schoolhouse. ^{He} ~~Ali~~ is remembered here as a very good student, and a hard worker, ^{and} neat, clean child. He is also remembered as having been somewhat aloof, as though he felt that he was someone special. But he was also a quiet boy who kept out of trouble.

Keeping out of trouble during those murderous years in Turkey was a fulltime job. Terrorist killings and executions were commonplace.

base in ^{Malatya} ~~Malatya~~. One of its leaders was ^{Teslim} ~~Teslim~~ ^{Tore} ~~Tore~~. His name is worth remembering. Like

Agca, Tore was born in Malatya... and founded the Turkish People's Liberation Army -- a Marxist terrorist organization.

Ankara, Turkey's capital was the next step in Agca's coming of age as a professional terrorist.

Our intelligence sources believe that before leaving home for Ankara, Agca had already been recruited by a clandestine organization. [

] Later he told his family he didn't like Ankara and wanted to study economics at Istanbul University. [

MCLAUGHLIN VO (Gunshots) In the spring of 1977, when he was 19 years old, Agca said he crossed secretly into Syria...and was taken by Teslim Tore to a guerrilla camp like this one south of Beirut. The camp Agca attended was run by the pro-Soviet Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Teslim Tore brought hundreds of Turks, like Agca, to Lebanon for terrorist training. It is now clear that a few months after that training in December 1977 Agca was on someone's secret payroll. These bank account records prove that at the age of 19, the poor student from Malatya was in fact a well-paid member of a clandestine organization. The first entry, for 40,000 Turkish lire (about \$2,000) was deposited by someone claiming to be Agca, except it wasn't Agca's signature.

SAHIR ERMAN OC Through interpreter

The signature when the account was opened and the signature for the withdrawal were not the same. Someone went to the bank under the name of Mehmet Ali Agca, giving false addresses -- addresses that do not exist in Istanbul. They are imaginary addresses.

BILL MCLAUGHLIN: VO

Agca's sponsors set up accounts for him in several Turkish banks. It was a convenient and safe way to transfer funds to Agca. It is estimated that over a twelve month period, Agca was paid at least \$18,000. After moving to Istanbul,

Agca hung out at the ^{Hemen} ~~_____~~ Cafe, a favorite watering hole for the Gray Wolves. It was also frequented by members of the Turkish Mafia, who had close ties to Bulgarian intelligence.

This, then, was Agca's world in Istanbul. A world of left- and right-wing extremists, of arms smugglers, ^{drug} ~~_____~~ dealers, and secret agents, making deals in cheap cafes. It was the start of 1979, and Agca was ready for his first big job.

Bill McL OC
This is ^{just} where ^{Mehmet} ~~_____~~ Ali Agca committed his first murder. This is where he shot and killed Turkey's best known editor, Abdi ^{Ipekci} ~~_____~~ but why ^{Ipekci} ~~_____~~? He was a loud voice in Turkey for reason and moderation. ^(kill) ~~_____~~ He was a voice ^{that} ~~_____~~ spoke out against terrorism, and it

~~_____~~ spoke with a pro-Western accent. ^{Ipekci} ~~_____~~

was a progressive liberal. He was despised by the Right, but had angered the Left by coming out in favor of martial law to stop terrorism.

He was outspoken in his beliefs. Someone decided that ^{Ipekci} ~~_____~~ had to be silenced. Agca silenced ^{Ipekci} ~~_____~~ riddling his body and his car with bullets on the evening of February 1, 1979. ^{Ipekci's} ~~_____~~ murder, ~~_____~~

act of terrorism that further destabilized Turkey.
A *nation-wide* ~~manhunt~~ manhunt for his killer ended on June 25.

An anonymous tip led ~~the~~ police to Agca, who freely admitted that he was the assassin. In a televised news conference, Agca insisted that he ~~acted~~ acted alone.

Mehmet
~~ALI~~ ALI AGCA:

[In Turkish].

BILL McLAUGHLIN: *10*

But he did not act alone. NBC News has obtained these *bank* ~~records~~ *which show that* Agca was paid 200,000 Turkish *lira* ~~(worth \$10,000 at the time)~~ two months before the *took* ~~murder~~ murder. The money was deposited in his name in a bank near Istanbul.

It was withdrawn a month later *on* January 4, 1979 ... in *Malatya*. The payment reinforces the image of Agca as a *cold-blooded* ~~killer~~ killer for hire--a terrorist without ideology.

And Agca was not alone even while awaiting trial for the ~~murder~~ ^{Tpeka} murder in the maximum security ~~Kartel - Hulepe~~ Prison. On the night of November 24, 1979, Agca, wearing a military uniform, passed through eight checkpoints to a waiting car.

His escape, from Turkey's Alcatraz, is still a mystery, ^{with an intriguing question mark} ~~_____~~

~~_____~~
~~_____~~
could ^{it have been related to the plot} ~~_____~~ to the ~~_____~~ to kill the Pope?

It is possible that the idea of the assassination came in stages. What does appear certain is that when Agca escaped, he escaped for the purpose of using him later for some sort of operation, not necessarily for this one, but simply to make available for use a killer who had already committed a homicide and who was notorious for his coldbloodedness.

BILL MCLAUGHLIN:

^(from Prison)
The day after his escape, Agca wrote a letter to ~~_____~~ ^{Tpeka's} newspaper. The young terrorist, who cared little for religion and who was rarely seen inside a mosque, threatened to kill Pope John Paul II during his visit to Turkey. The Pope arrived in Turkey two days later. [PROCESSIONAL MUSIC] Because of Agca's threat, the Turkish government ordered extraordinary security measures for the Pontiff's visit. ^{FR}

As for Agca, he later claimed that his threat had merely been a diversion to confuse the Turkish police and allow him to escape from the country. ✓

The Turkish phase of Agca's life was over. He was now an international terrorist.

Act III

MARVIN KALB:

For the next six months, Agca's trail is difficult to follow. He said that, for a time, he went to Iran--even named the hotels, but this cannot be confirmed. ~~Turkish and Italian?~~ intel-
ligence say he might also have gone to Syria for ~~guerrilla~~ training, but this cannot be confirmed either. The trail only becomes clearer in July, 1980, when ~~he~~ surfaced ~~in Eastern~~ Europe, Bulgaria, Turkey's next door neighbor.

For the believing Communist, Bulgaria must be God's Little Acre--a tightly run dictatorship on a short leash to Moscow, responsible in recent years for ~~guerrilla~~ training and sanctuary. Courage and political independence are not its hallmarks. No foreigner, especially a known Turkish terrorist on the lam, could spend seven weeks in the best hotels in ~~Sofia~~ without the knowledge and approval of the Bulgarian secret service. Agca, by his own testimony, arrived in ~~Sofia~~ between July 10th and 15th, and checked into the modern Hotel Vitosha.

In Room 911, he met a fellow Turk, Omer Mersan.

Agca claimed ^{that} Mersan helped him get a passport containing his photograph but using the name of Faruk OSGUN, the same passport Agca carried when seized in St. Peter's Square. Agca also claimed that he bought a gun here, but this is not true.

At the time Mersan worked for a huge drug and gun-running operation controlled Mafia -style, by yet another Turk, Abuzer Ugurlu, known as "The Godfather". He has been on trial for gun smuggling in Turkey , even though he runs his thriving illegal business out of Bulgaria and travels on a Bulgarian passport. Agca claimed that he had met Ugurlu in Sofia , a claim Italian investigators believe, even though Ugurlu denied it. In a fashion both quixotic and profitable, Communist Bulgaria cooperates with this Turkish Mafia. Ugor Mumcu , a Turkish expert on Bulgaria's middleman role between the drug pushers of the East and the gun dealers of the West.

passport, money and protection in an East European satellite. Could that have been provided without the cooperation of the Bulgarian Secret Police, and therefore, without the knowledge of the Soviet KGB? Only if you believe in political fairy tales. Vladimir Sakharov, a KGB agent who defected.

Vladimir Sakharov, a KGB agent who de-

VLADIMIR SAKHAROV:

Soviet KGB must know, and they do, what the Bulgarian secret service does at all times. Bulgarian service is ^{most} tightly controlled than. . . it is as close to the Soviet KGB as you can be.

MARVIN KALB:

By the time Agca left Bulgaria for Western Europe on August 31, it seems safe to conclude that he had been drawn into the clandestine network of the Bulgarian secret police and, by extension, the Soviet KGB -- perhaps without him even being aware of their possible plans for him.

[TURKISH CHANTS] These Turks are in West Germany, where Agca spent most of the fall and winter, part of that time here in West Berlin, where the Turkish quarter nestles up against the Berlin wall. There are in West Germany 1.6 million Turkish workers, the so-called "guest workers," cheap labor to help fuel the German economy. For a known fugitive, no other country on the

continent provided better cover, especially during Agca's early exposure to the West. He hid among his hardworking countrymen, ~~most~~^{many} of whom were probably frightened by the young killer, or indifferent. Some clearly helped-- with money, sanctuary, and intelligence. They were members of the ~~Grey~~^{Grey} Wolves, the same fanatical fascists who terrorized Turkey and who now honeycombed the Turkish community in West Germany,

The ~~Grey~~^{Grey} Wolves, ~~functioned~~^{functioned} in part as a kind of Western branch office of the Turkish Mafia.

Ali ~~Yurtaslan~~^{Yurtaslan}, a defector, directly links Agca to the ~~Grey~~^{Grey} Wolves in West Germany.

Ali Yurtaslan

I know this fact beyond any doubt. The gray wolves arranged mehmet ali agca's escape from prison in turkey and his subsequent safe passage to Europe and Germany. The people who arranged Agca's escape obtained a false passprt for him and provided him with money. After his arrival in Europe, Agca was employed by the Grey Wolves [REDACTED] as a tough who was used to intimidate ^{THEIR} opponents [REDACTED].

MARVIN KALB:

-- Four times in this mercurial environment, Agca was spotted by unsympathetic Turks who had apparently seen his photograph in the German edition of the popular Turkish newspaper ^{Hillier's} [REDACTED] -- on October 3, 1980, in Frankfurt; on November 6th and December 11th in West Berlin. ^{but in yet another place, on December 29th}

They promptly informed West German authorities. Four times, the Germans claimed they tried, but failed to catch Agca.

[BAND MUSIC] Often Agca slipped across the ^{Swiss} border into Zurich, where there was also a large Turkish community.

Twice he stayed at the Hotel Rutli-from Sept 9th to 12th, 1980; again, on March 3rd 1981, a particularly important day. It's now been learned that it was then that Agca met with Musa Cedar Celebi, a Grey Wolf leader in Frankfurt. At the meeting Celebi offered Agca 3 million W. German Deutchmarks to kill the Pope, also offered him sanctuary in Bulgaria, a highly improbable offer unless it had the approval of Bulgarian authorities. According to Vatican sources, it was here in Switzerland, as well as in W. Germany, that Agca also received spending money, lots of it. By the time he reached St. Peter's Square, he had spent an estimated \$50,000.

Agca never visited this gun store in Zurich, shuttered against intruders, but the gun that was used to shoot the Pope was purchased here on July 9th 1980, a 9 mm Browning automatic. It was then smuggled illegally into Austria into the hands of Horst Grillmeier, the son of a known Nazi and an associate of the Turkish smuggler, Urgulu.

In March, 1981, Grillmeier, using a Turkish intermediary, got the gun to Agca.

Olten, a suburb of Zurich, now a haven for the Grey Wolves, there on April 2nd, Agca gave the gun to Omer Bacci, a 36 = year old Turkish contact, gave it to him for safe keeping. This information came originally from Agca. It has now been confirmed by Swiss intelligence.

At this point, it may be helpful to note the surprising fact that Agca, an international fugative, wanted by police, passport and customs officers, throughout the Continent, still managed to travel through twelve countries with apparent ease- - hardly testimony to the efficiency of the INTERPOL sytem.

Though controlled for the most part by the left, he took on the coloration of the right, acting on behalf of the Turkish Mafia, hooked into the Bulgarian Secret Police and protected by the Grey Wolves, an intricate and sophisticated international network.

ACT IV

By the time Agca returned to Italy in early April, 1981, he began to operate like a terrorist on a tight deadline. On April 8th he arrived in Perugia, a univeristy town in central Italy.

Normally,

a tourist from the Middle East gets a one month visa. Agca, for his purposes, needed more time -- and a different kind of cover. He decided to get a three-month student residence permit. Agca stayed first at the Hotel Posta, temporary home for many foreigners. I talked with the manager.

Kalb Cont'd.

I'm trying to trace the name of the man who checked into this hotel. . . He checked into this hotel on April 8, 1981.

HOTEL MANAGER:

[IN ITALIAN].

MARVIN KALB:

Yes. And his name is ^{OC} ~~Faruk Ozgen~~ ^{OC} [VOICEOVER: The name on his fake passport.] Would you be able to check your books and see what. .

[VOICEOVER: The manager checked the hotel's registration book for 1981. Her pen found the name.] Here. [

On April 9th, Agca enrolled at the University for Foreigners. The fee? \$210. He got the student permit he needed, and the name he used was ^{du ty} ~~du ty~~ listed in proper alphabetical order in a computerized printout.

On April 10th, he attended one class, in Beginner's Italian.

Never showed up again.

Milan--under the dome of the Galleria, the elegant beefy cafe where Agca had been spotted a few months before. Now on April 23rd, he returned to Milan to the Condor Travel Agency to buy a two-week honeymooners' tour of Majorca. [MUSIC]

Agca went alone. A guest at the luxurious Hotel Flamboyant

According to information from Swiss and W. German wiretaps, it was from here that Agca telephoned Celebi in Frankfurt, said, "I have received the sum we agreed. I'll go to Rome to carry it out." Agca then telephoned Bacci in Olten. Told him to bring the gun to the Milan railroad station and have it there by May 9th.

Both Celebi and Bacci worked for a prominent Turkish smuggler, Bekir Celenk, who took his orders

from a Turkish businessman in London named *Bekir Celebi*, who, in turn, took his order from *Usurha*, head of the Turkish Mafia who, in turn, collaborated with the Bulgarians in a number of dark activities. This complex layering of responsibility,

Kalb cont'd.

this deliberate distancing of one level of authority from another, is said to be typical of the highly professional operation of the Soviet KGB.

FRANCISCO MAZZOLA, FORMER SECURITY MINISTER
~~(unidentified voice - not Kalb's)~~

In these cases, there is never any evidence, because in this realm of secret wars of proxie wars no traces are supposed to be left. Actually, it might even be that Ali Agca committed this without even knowing who had commissioned him. That is, if the operation had been carried out by the book, the killer wouldn't even know who made him do it.

On May 9th, Agca returned to Milan and went to the railroad station. In a very obvious place, the left luggage department, [^]he picked up the gun left there by Bacci, ~~as~~ as instructed.

On May 10th, Agca left for Rome where he checked a small satchel containing his gun in the railroad luggage department.

On May 12th, Agca checked into the Pensione ^{Isa} a ten minute walk from St. Peter's Square. The room clerk remembers Agca.

ROOM CLERK:

He was not talking a lot; just a "Good Morning," "Good Evening," asking for the key, that's all.

Bill Turque

[NBC]:

Did he seem calm, or nervous?

ROOM CLERK:

No. Always very calm. Always. Now, ^{I remember} ~~lunatic~~ ~~side~~ even too much. Maybe. And even he was not used to have breakfast. Or whatever he paid for it.

BILL McLAUGHLIN

Did you ever see him with anybody, or talking to anybody?

ROOM CLERK

Always alone. Always alone.

But on May 13th, Agca was not alone. Or so he says. He got up early at 7 AM and left his small unpretentious room by 9. He spent the morning walking through Rome. In his pocket was a handwritten list of things to remember. Among them: "Be careful of the food." And "if necessary, wear a cross."

At a pre-arranged time, Agca went to the railroad station where he claims he was picked up by two Bulgarians, Sergei Ivanov Antonov, who has been arrested, and Todor Alvazov, an official with diplomatic protection who has returned to Bulgaria. The three conspirators, by this account, then stopped at an apartment house where many Bulgarians live. There were last minute checks of plans and weapons. Around four PM, Agca said that the Bulgarians drove ^{him} ~~him~~ to St. Peter's Square. The Pope's Wednesday ^{8. M. J.} audience was just beginning. At 5:17^A Agca shot the Pope.

Even though the Pope these days seems like a tired man, he remains heavily engaged in Church and world affairs- still an extraordinarily controversial public figure. The investigation into the attempt on Pope John Paul's life has mushroomed into a major international problem. For a while, the Vatican quietly helped the investigators, pointing to leads in Eastern Europe. Now, with these leads being actively pursued, the Vatican feels it can safely retreat into ecclesiastical silence. Its work is being done by others.

None plays a more central role than ^{the} Roman magistrate, Ilario Martella. Cautious and courageous with a reputation for honesty, Martella has been accumulating evidence for more than a year. ^{He} has said little, traveled much - to the United States, Turkey, West Germany, Switzerland, untangling a web of conspiracy that has its roots in Bulgaria.

Omer Ba^{le}ci, a Turk, who helped Agca with the gun. He was arrested in Switzerland last summer, held at the Regensdorf prison, near Zurich, until at Martella's request, he was extradited to Rome on Oct 16, 1982.

Mussa Cedar Celebi, another Turk implicated with Agca in the Papal plot. He was arrested by West German police on November 3rd, extradited to Rome on January 14th. He has now confessed to having dealt with Agaca.

Horst Grillmeier, an Austrian arms smuggler, involved in getting the gun to Agca. He was arrested on January 11th, charged with smuggling Soviet weapons across the Czechoslovak border into Austria. He is being held in the Koenigsburg prison outside of Vienna. ^{Saving of} The stunning arrest and extraditions angered and alarmed ~~the~~ Bulgarians and the Soviet Union. Both denied any involvement ~~with~~ in the Papal plot. On Dec. 17th what rarely happens in Bulgaria happened. Foreign correspondents were invited to a news conference. Present for questioning were: Bakir Celenk, a Turkish smuggler accused of having bankrolled the plot. Italy had issued a warrant for his arrest on Oct 26th. The Bulgarians put him under police custody on Dec 9th. Celenk posed as a hurt, angelic innocent.

Yelio Kolev Vasilev, ^{former} ~~an~~ aide to the Bulgarian military attache in Rome, fingered by Agca along with Antonov as an active accomplice in the plot. He too, professed outrage and innocence.

And Todor Teodorov Alvazov, described as a financial officer at the Bulgarian. He had diplomatic immunity and could not be arrested.

These Bulgarians were known to Agca only by code names. He identified them from a batch of 56 photographs provided by Martella.

Bulgaria bombarded the correspondents with pamphlets, denials and explanations, charging in the process that if anyone was responsible for plotting to shoot the Pope, it was the CIA.

The Soviet Union under its new leader, Yuri Andropov, for 15 years, chief of the KGB, added its own wrinkle to Bulgaria's attack, directly accusing the Pope of subversive activities in Poland by creating the Solidarity trade union. On Dec 20th, Italy counter-attacked. Cabinet ministers addressed a special session of Parliament. The Defense Minister called the attempted assassination "an act of war", explaining that in his view it was "an alternative solution to invading Poland." The Interior Minister charged that Bulgarian diplomats, agents and tourists were involved in the assassination plot. But if Bulgaria was involved as asserted, what about the Soviet Union? Roberto Poleski, no. 2 man in the Italian Foreign Ministry added up the evidence and concluded that the KGB masterminded the plot.

ROBERTO POLESKI

I am saying that if the Bulgarians services are involved, they are doing it on behalf of the secret services of the Soviet Union.

Four months ago, we concluded our original report by saying that the evidence suggests that either the Russians hatched the plot against the Pope as one desperate way of containing the crises in Poland or, at a minimum, they knew about it and did nothing to stop it. The evidence now is even more persuasive, and yet in this matter, the Reagan Administration is etching no profile in courage, allowing Italy to stand alone against the fury of the Soviet Union. Indeed, some key aides of the CIA, both here and in Washington, are actively discouraging American newsmen and Italian investigators from pursuing their obvious leads. Why? Surely not because they believe that the Russians are innocent. Part of the explanation lies in the ironic fact that many in the United States and Western Europe would rather not be provided the proof of Soviet complicity at this time. In their minds, that could shatter hopes for detent, trade and arms agreements. It really shouldn't because this has never been an either-or proposition. Still, the attempt on the Pope's life was^a special, evil form of state-sponsored terrorism with grim implications. The continuing investigation here has the potential of a time bomb ticking away in a corner of East-West relations. I am Marvin Kalb, NBC News.

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